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the two productions of Miss Owenson he mentions, which I intend doing as soon as I have leisure, but I have her other works, and have in general thought highly of them, and must request permission to consider it as great an honour to have that fair writer my country woman, as if her name was enrolled in the pompous list above alluded to. Her latter writings must indeed have fallen extremely short of her former, if they do not add to her fame, with them make her an ornament to her sex and country, and merit for her the honourable appellation of "a truly patriotic Irish-woman."

I have now, Sir, given you some trouble, which you'll be pleased to put to the account of your "Lover of Simplicity of character," for although I felt a kind of horror at the "anecdotes" and the rejoinder, yet but for his pertinacity I should never have been able to conquer my natural reluctance to appear in your pages.—I will therefore take my leave of you and your readers without any apology, and intend henceforth to leave Sterne to his own merits and the candid construction of his readers; perfectly agreeing with what was happily expressed, I think by himself, that, his books may be contemplated with the same innocence and purity of thought as a beautiful infant sprawling naked on the floor. T.

*Belfast, May 18th, 1809.*

*To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.*

SKETCH OF A RAMBLE TO ANTRIM,  
TAKEN JULY 10TH, 1808.

**I** LEFT Carrickfergus just as the sun began to make his appearance in the Eastern horizon, and took the road leading to Antrim, by the way of Ballyclare. The morning was one of the finest I had ever seen; not a leaf shook with the wind; even the morning zephyr slumbered, and nought disturbed the silence, save the bay of the watch-dogs, in the print-fields by which I passed. During the night there had been a copious fall of dew, which being now struck by the oblique rays of the rising sun, glittered on each leaf like innumerable pearls; my soul felt the harmony of the scene; for, to use the words of the poet:

“ . . . . . “ all things smiled  
“ With fragrance, and with joy my heart  
“ o’erflow’d.”

I wanted, however, the morn song of the birds to enliven this charming scene, for nought was heard of their late carols, but here and there a chirping of the mother and her young among the hedges.

“ The groves, the fields, the meadows,  
“ now no more

“ With melody resound; ’tis silence all.

“ As if the lovely songsters, overwhelm’d

“ By bounteous nature’s plenty, lay in—  
“ tranced

“ In drowsy lethargy.”

I soon ascended the hill called Bryan-tang, and looking back, had a fine view of the town and castle, the Copeland isles, the opposite shore of Down, the entrance of the bay, and several vessels becalmed in the offing. I stood a few minutes contemplating the prospect before me, when the notes of a thrush in the adjacent glen roused my attention, and seemed to hail the rays of the rising sun with the utmost raptures. I listened a little to its charming melody, then quickly pursued my journey, and leaving the main road, ascended the hill called Slieve true, on the top of which is a large cairn of stones, supposed to be an ancient funeral pile of the dead. I ascended the cairn to enjoy the charming prospect which it affords; it is truly grand, especially the view of the valley extending from Loaghneagh to Larne, a space of about sixteen miles in length, and, at a mean, about seven in breadth; the country had a very pleasant appearance, being generally in a high state of cultivation, interspersed with numerous villages, villas and bleach-greens; the sight recalled to my memory these lines of the poet,

“ O vale of bliss! O softly-swelling hills,  
“ On which the power of cultivation lies,  
“ And joys to see the wonders of his toil.”

A part of the town of Belfast is seen from hence; also the mountains of Mourne, and some high hills in the counties of Tyrone and Derry; the morning being pretty clear, I saw likewise some of the mountains of Scotland, and the Isle of Man. About twelve years ago, James Craig, esq. M. P. proprietor of the soil, built an elegant school-house here, but from its stormy situation in winter, and the

danger the children were exposed to in summer from cattle, it was deserted, and is in a very ruinous state at present; an antiquarian of the next century will probably suppose it to have been an ancient fortress. I now descended from the cairn, and leaving the hill, shaped my course for the house of an acquaintance who lived adjacent: on lifting the latch I entered, but he was not up; he quickly arose, and eagerly inquired the cause of my early visit, and having told him, he proposed to accompany me. I now began to rally him for not having his door fastened inside; but he said, that he was in no danger from robbers, and repeated these lines:

"He that has just enough can soundly  
"sleep,

"The o'ercome only fashes fowk to keep."

He now kindled some heath, for the purpose of getting ready breakfast, and I sat down in a corner to look at a number of books, which were promiscuously mixed with the implements of his trade; they consisted of several odd volumes of plays, novels, and political tracts, as *Billy Bluff*, &c. I inquired if this was his whole library, of which I had heard him say so much; he answered in the negative, and opening a book case, bade me look there: it was really crammed with books chiefly select, as *Hume's History of England*, *Gibbon's Decline of the Roman Empire*, *Gordon's History of Ireland*, *Heron's Scotland*, several modern tours, and a large collection of magazines. The novels and poetical works I found equally elegant, and very numerous. By the time I had turned over these books, breakfast was ready, and we both made a hearty meal, and departed. The soil here is poor, and as there is nothing striking in its scenery, I hope the reader will not be displeased with a sketch of the person and character of my fellow-traveller, who, I conclude, he thinks is somewhat eccentric. In person he is of the middle size; the outlines of his features, according to Lavater, rather unmeaning, and displaying little trace of that knowledge he is really possessed of; his temper is of the most even class, not easily raised nor depressed; in religion and politics his opinions are

very liberal; but it is said, he has "studied himself into infidelity;" yet from his inoffensive demeanor, he is ranked among the best of unbelievers; his powers of description are very faint, yet there are few persons better acquainted with the natural curiosities of this and the neighbouring islands. But to return to my narrative: after travelling about two or three miles across a country not very remarkable for the neatness of its cultivation, we came in sight of Ballyclare; at the sight of this small town,

"Remembrance wak'd, with all her busy  
"train."

It was my native place, and upwards of eleven years had elapsed since slander had driven me hence. I could not pass the little bridge, as you enter the town from Belfast, without halting. I leaned against the range wall—the sight gave my mind a melancholy cast—to me each object was interesting—every look reminded me of some juvenile amusement—at my feet was the place where I had whipped the top—beneath was the little pool where I used to snare the trout and eel—close by was the hawthorn hedge, where often I had made my childish plays—and a few perches distant was my native cot; the scene affected me, and was productive of the following lines:

Hail! little stream, still to me dear,  
Here memory presents to view  
Those happy scenes, which on thy banks  
In youthful innocence I knew.

On yonder green, when school let loose,  
The village youth to sport and play,  
The noisy groups oft, oft, I join'd  
In rural sports, till close of day.

Beneath yon hedge I oft have sat,  
With others, making noisy glee;  
The trees, the stones, that's hereabout,  
As old acquaintance here I see.

I see the cot where first I drew

The vital air in of this clay;

And may \* \* \* \*

Whose slander forc'd me hence to stray

Here years roll'd by most unperceiv'd,  
Free from all care, in thoughtless ease;  
My pastimes now, though more refin'd,  
Have not the charm, alas! to please.

Corroding care now fills my breast;  
Yet when sweet hope does lend a gleam,  
And earthly joys presents to view,  
The scene is ever by thy stream.

My comrade, who sat patiently while I took down the above lines, now urged me to renew our journey. I arose, not without emotion, and we resolved to take the upper road by Doagh; but first it will be necessary to give the reader an account of Ballyclare, before we proceed further.

Ballyclare is pleasantly situated on the six-mile water, which runs through it, and is joined by a bridge with four arches. It consists of 102 dwelling-houses, containing about 500 inhabitants; the inhabitants and houses are nearly double what they were about thirty years ago. Near the centre of the town is a meeting-house belonging to Dissenters, but there is no established church here; yet as the people are nearly to a man Dissenters, besides, mostly free from tythe, the want is not much regretted. Here is held a large monthly market for linen-yarn, &c. Fairs are also held near each quarterly term. It is also a post town. Some cotton is wrought here, but the mass of the people in the town and neighbourhood are employed at the linen business. Near the town is a cotton bleachfield, which employs a considerable number of hands. There is also a paper-mill. Adjoining the town are two Danish raths. The soil here is mostly a light mould, and pretty good, but in general cultivated in a slovenly manner. As I passed through, I looked for the little school-house where I first learned to read—it was now a ruin, and seemed to

‘Ask from my heart the homage of a sigh.’

And, courteous reader, a sigh was not refused. The morning continuing calm and warm, we walked slowly, musing as we jogged along, on the universal beauty of the face of nature at this delightful season of the year; indeed she is now decked in her gayest attire; the trees are all in full foliage; very little meadow is cut down; the flax is in bloom; even the late potatoes, to use the farmer’s phrase, have covered the clod, while those set early bespangle the fields with innumerable variegated blossoms; the corn has also begun to shoot forth its ragged head from confinement, as if to witness the general beauty of the scene—

“And all the earth with short-lived beauty  
“glows.”

Time and road both passing agreeably we soon reached Fisherwick, an elegant hunting lodge belonging to the Marquis of Donegall, near Doagh; the sight surprized me, as I had not been in this part for several years; the country had assumed a new face; the cabins of the peasantry had been thrown down to make room for stables, dog-kennels, &c. and instead of the fields rusting with corn, or blooming with the potatoe ridges of the neighbouring villagers, as when I saw them last, they presented tufts of young trees, shrubberies, walks, and fish-ponds, on the surface of which was a pleasure boat, and some beautiful swans. The man of pleasure may probably relish this “barren splendour;” as for me, I beheld it with regret, especially when those lines of Goldsmith struck my memory:

“The man of wealth and pride  
“Takes up a space that many poor sup-  
“plied;  
“Space for his lake, his park’s extended  
“bounds;  
“Space for his horses, equipage, and  
“bounds.”

The same author also very justly remarks:

“Thus fares the land by luxury betray’d,  
“In nature’s simplest charms at first  
“array’d,  
“But verging to decline, its splendours  
“rise,  
“Its vistas strike, its palaces surprize;  
“While scourg’d by famine, from the  
“smiling land  
“The mournful peasant leads his humble  
“band;  
“And while he sinks, without one arm to  
“save,  
“The country blooms, a garden and a  
“grave.”

Indeed, at present, the rage for villas in this country, is not confined to the nobleman or landed gentleman, it has come to the merchant, and in some instances even to the mechanic. Leaving this place, we entered Doagh; this is a small village, consisting of about thirty dwelling-houses, situated on the road leading from Belfast to Ballymena, and about ten miles from each place. It contains nothing remarkable except its book clubs, which are the most ancient and extensive in this part of the country, the people generally having a taste for literature. Their club-room is furnished with globes,

maps, &c. Much praise is due to Mr. W. Galt, for his exertions in promoting these and similar societies, instead of the Royal sport of cock-fighting, &c. so very destructive of the morals of the lower orders of the people. Here is a neat inn, which we entered to take some refreshment; it is exceedingly regular and clean; in short, I think its whole appearance would have given satisfaction even to Mr. Twiss himself. We halted only a short time here, and leaving the main road, crossed the country to Hole-stone, the seat of Mr. Owens; this place takes its name from a very singular stone, set upright a few fields from his house. This stone stands on a rising crag, and is five feet high above the ground, and seemingly about two feet below it; it is three feet in breadth, and nine inches thick; three feet from the ground is a round hole through it, wide enough to admit a man's hand. tradition says, this stone was a land mark of the ancient Irish chieftains. We now pushed forward for Donogore hill, being curious to see the post of the insurgents of this quarter, on the 7th of June, 1798, where we soon arrived, much fatigued, the day being now very warm; we sat down on a crag near its centre; and as this hill has obtained a place in modern history, I hope a short description of it will not be displeasing to the reader. This hill rises on each side by a gradual ascent, the summit is flat, and completely commands the adjacent country; the surface is covered with a light stratum of earth, overgrown with moss; the hill seems formed of a huge rock, as crags appear in several places. The adjoining country is mostly very fertile, intersected with numerous hedges, &c. which would considerably impede the approach of troops. To be as short as possible, I believe there is not a better position for an encampment of ten or twelve thousand men any where in Ireland. The assemblage of people here on the 7th of June, 1798, was of short duration; for on some fugitives arriving from Antrim, after the action there, the people instantly dispersed. From this hill there is a delightful view of the adjoining country, as also of Lough-neagh, which has more the appearance of a sea than a lough; Rams-

island\*, with its round tower; Shane's castle, Randalstown, Antrim, also the round tower near it; Templepatrick, likewise Castle Upton near it; also the neighbouring hill of Kairncary, on the top of which I was informed there was a large cairn of stones, similar to that on Slieve-true. We now arose and departed, and descending from the hill, passed by a large rock called the Priest's Crag, directing our course for the round tower near Antrim. The land we passed over was generally light mould, and seemed to need manure very much; however, as we approached Antrim it became much better, and we passed some fields of excellent wheat, in that state so finely described by Bloomfield:

" Shot up from broad rank blades that  
" droop below,  
" The nodding wheat-ear forms a grace-  
" ful bow;  
" With milky kernels, starting full,  
" weigh'd down,  
" Ere yet the sun had ting'd its head  
" with brown."

We now arrived at the lofty round tower, it stands about half a mile from Antrim; in low ground, in a yard near the road leading from Antrim to Ballymena. We inquired at a house close by, if we could be permitted to enter the yard, to take a more minute view; a genteel elderly woman answered in the affirmative, and with the utmost affability, conducted us thither. This tower is perfectly round, both internally and externally, and is but little impaired by time; it is very high, and tapers about eighteen feet from the top in form of a sugar loaf; it is fifty-two feet in girth near the base, and seemingly about thirty-six near the top, before it begins to taper. At the ground are two circles of stones, projecting about eight inches each; nine feet above these stones is a small door facing the north, there are no steps up to the door, nor any appearance of its ever having had such. There are three tier of loop-holes, for the admission of air and light; those near the top are round, and correspond

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\* This is a small island in Lough-neagh, situated about two miles from the county Antrim shore; and contains about seven acres of pasture. On it is one of the round towers, so common in Ireland,

with the four cardinal points; within are places in the wall for resting beams, evidently for the purpose of making the tower into storie. The masonry is good, and the wall upwards of three feet thick; the loop-holes and door are arched with hewn stone. Much attention is paid by the gentleman in whose yard it stands to this monument of antiquity, as he has had its base plastered, &c. within these few years. Tradition says the town of Antrim formerly stood here, and that this tower was built by a woman, but for what use is not mentioned even by tradition\*. Having satisfied ourselves as far as possible, and returned sincere thanks to our kind conductress, we proceeded to Antrim, passing some fields of blooming potatoes set in drills, which for neatness of cultivation I never remember to have seen equalled. Antrim (antiently Andruim) is a market and Post town, situated near Lough-neagh, on the banks of the six-mile water, which dis-embogues itself into the lough a little below the town; it is 84 miles north of Dublin, and 12 N.W. of Belfast; it consists chiefly of one long street, the houses whereof are built of stone, brick, and clay, and are generally in a ruinous state; the number of dwelling-houses, or huts (for really the lanes, &c. are mostly miserable mud hovels) is 432; supposed number of inhabitants 2,500. The parish church stands near the centre of the town, it has no spire;

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\* Concerning the erection and use of these towers, history and tradition are both silent, consequently the learned have only been able to furnish us with hypothesis on that subject. Cambrensis speaks of them in the twelfth century, as being of great antiquity, but gives no intimation of their original use. Ledwich thinks they were built for belfries to the ancient churches. This, I think, is not improbable, as it is known, that the primitive churches in this kingdom were constructed with wattles, or willows, wrought in the manner of wicker-work. General Vallancey supposes they were built by the Phœnicians, or Carthaginians, in their visits to Ireland, for fire altars, depositories of the sacred fire. The latest remarks upon them are by Dr. Milner, who thinks they were built as habitations for certain religious recluses, in the early ages of Christianity.

a small belfry has been lately erected, furnished with a clock and bell; there are also two meeting-houses belonging to Dissenters. The Market-house stands in the street, at the west end of the town; it is a neat building, supported by pillars; above is a large room where the sessions are held. A market is held here each Thursday, but it is not very large. Near the market place is Mazareene castle, an old building; like every thing here, it is in a tottering state, and rapidly going to ruin. Here are large flour mills, likewise some breweries. Near the town is a small spring of Chalybeate water, much used for various diseases. The soil near the town is very good, and during summer the inhabitants make some excellent cheese for sale. A considerable number of hands are employed here in weaving cotton; the work all belongs to merchants from Carrickfergus or Belfast, who have offices here. Previous to the Union this was a potwalloping borough, under the influence of the Skeffington family, who, at the the Union, are said to have received 16,000*l.* as a compensation for their loss of the same. Few inland towns in Ireland are better situated for trade than this, on account of its proximity to Lough-neagh; yet with this great advantage there is very little commerce here. June 7th, 1798, a smart action took place here between a party of the king's troops, and a large body of insurgents; the latter were at first successful, and obtained possession of the town, but reinforcements arriving to the army from Belfast, &c. the insurgents fled in great confusion, leaving behind them three pieces of cannon; two of them had been previously taken from the army. The loss of the army on this occasion was twenty-one killed, and between thirty and forty wounded. The loss of the insurgents could never be correctly known, but is supposed to have amounted to nearly three hundred. Our perambulation having now sufficiently whetted our appetites, we entered a public house to take some refreshment; the landlady happened to be an old acquaintance, and received us with the utmost courtesy; and after fetching in some whiskey, brought us a more essential refreshment.

(To be continued.)